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ALNWICK  
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT

OF THE



MEDICAL OFFICER OF

HEALTH

1953

ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS

OF THE

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Medical Officer of Health.....B. Trevor-Roper, M.B., C.L.B.  
M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Clerk of the Council.....Richard Rothwell, M.B.E.

Engineer and Surveyor.....Oswald M. Farrell, M.C.I.A., A.F.A.S.

Sanitary Inspector.....Rowland E. Dunn, A.R. San. I.  
Meat and Foods Inspector.

Old Court Buildings,  
34 Green Batt,  
ALNWICK,  
Northumberland.

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ALNWICK

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1953

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Report for 1953 is on the lines similar to those of previous years.

GENERAL STATISTICS

The Area of the District is 92,964 acres.

The number of Inhabited Houses is 4,078.

The number of Inhabited Houses erected during 1953 is 136, of which 16 were erected by private enterprise.

The Rateable Value is £54,050. 0. 0. and the sum represented by a penny rate is £214. 7. 6.

The estimated mid-year population is 11,800 and this figure is taken when calculating the Birth and Death Rates.

VITAL STATISTICS

Births

The number of births during the year corrected for inward and outward transfer - is 176, and of these 4 were still births and one was illegitimate.

Birth Rate for 1953	-	14.9	per	thousand	per	annum.
" " " 1952	-	13.3	"	"	"	"
" " " 1951	-	15.0	"	"	"	"
Birth Rate for 1953	-	15.8	"	"	"	"
(England & Wales)						

Deaths

The number of deaths - corrected for inward and outward transfers - was 136, of which 61 were males and 75 females.

Death Rate for 1953	-	11.5	per	thousand	per	annum.
" " " 1952	-	13.2	"	"	"	"
" " " 1951	-	13.4	"	"	"	"
Death Rate for 1953	-	11.4	"	"	"	"
(England & Wales)						

Infantile Deaths

The number of deaths in infants under one year of age was 2 - both legitimate - both males.

Infantile Death Rate for 1953	-	11.5	per	thousand	live	births.
" " " " 1952	-	19.1	"	"	"	"
" " " " 1951	-	27.9	"	"	"	"
Infantile Death Rate for 1953	-	28.6	"	"	"	"
(England & Wales)						

Causes of Death at All Ages

Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	- 1	Influenza	- 1
" (Other)	- 1	Pneumonia	- 2
Syphilitic Disease	- 1	Bronchitis	- 4
Malignant Disease	- 20	Other Respiratory Disease	- 1
Diabetes	- 1	Gastric & Duodenal Ulcer	- 1
Vascular Disease of Nervous System.	- 26	Gastro-enteritis	- 1
Heart Disease	- 45	Kidney Disease	- 2
Other Circulatory Diseases	- 7	Prostatic Disease	- 1
Accidents	5	Congenital Malformations	- 2
		Other defined and ill defined diseases	-14

Infectious Disease.

The number of Infectious Diseases notified to me during the year was 95, as follows:-

Whooping Cough	- 17	Acute Anterior	
Scarlet Fever	- 12	Polio-myelitis	- 1
Measles	- 48	(Non-paralytic)	
Erysipelas	- 1	Pulmonary Tuberculosis	-15
Pneumonia	- 1	Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis	2

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Water Supply

Installation of new surface pumps, and chlorination plant, with a new building at Shilbottle Colliery, on the Shilbottle/Warkworth Supply, was completed in July, including rearrangement of pumping and gravity feed mains in the Colliery Yard.

New 6", 5" and 4" mains were laid and completed between Shilbottle Hillhead Reservoir and Widow's Row, for the purpose of supplying the new Farriers Arms Housing Site and improving the supply to the Old Village High Level Area.

Work was in progress during the year on the new 6" main between Sturton Grange Borehole and Shilbottle Colliery.

Your Consulting Geologist, Dr. Hickling, recommended that a continuous pumping test should be carried out to test the yield of the Sturton Grange Borehole, because of the large reduction in the overflow from this source. Tenders for such a test were invited, but not proceeded with. Arrangements were made for a test to be carried out early in 1954, as and when electric supply became available, by the use of Council owned plant. This source is proposed to augment as a temporary measure the Shilbottle section of the Shilbottle/Warkworth Supply to facilitate the construction of a second installment of miners' houses at Shilbottle.

An overhead electric supply line was constructed by the Council at Cavil Head, Acklington, and an electrically operated pump installed in a temporary wooden pump house for the purpose of boosting water from Amble U.D.C. through the Acklington Aerodrome main primarily for the benefit of Acklington Village. This arrangement necessitated operating the pump 24 hours per day, since the pump had to deal with water for Acklington Aerodrome as well as Acklington Village.

The supply to Togston Village had to be augmented from a cross connection off the new Broomhill main by kind permission of Morpeth R.D.C. and Amble U.D.C.

Arrangements were made for tenders to be invited early in 1954 for works to improve the pressure at Craster Northside.



Messrs. Balfour's scheme of mains extension from Stamford to Longhoughton and Boulmer was completed during the year. Advantage was taken of this fact to try out a connection made at Longhoughton between the new main and the old Longhoughton to Field House Private Reservoir Main, with certain alterations to the piping around Field House Reservoir, for the purpose of supplying Foxton Drive and Hall with water from Stamford. The new arrangement prevented the need for sending the water cart to Foxton Drive, but cannot be regarded as anything but a very temporary answer to the problem.

### Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

During the year off site foul sewers and stormwater drains were completed at Shilbottle in connection with the new Farriers Arms Housing Site.

Arrangements were made for tenders to be invited early in 1954 for the construction of an intercepting sewer at Craster Southside to clear off the foreshore several objectionable outfall sewers.

There have been 11 recorded instances where new small sewage disposal works have been installed by private persons. Of the large number of such installations existing in the District, in only four cases has the attention of the Sanitary Inspector been called to works of functioning unsatisfactorily. In three of these cases the aeration beds were at fault and in the fourth, no septic action was taking place in the tank.

### Closet Accommodation

In existing properties, 36 new water closets have been provided during the year. Of these, 26 were grant aided directly from Council resources to the extent of £10. 0.0. per closet and 2 were grant aided under the Housing Act, 1949. These conversions resulted in the abolition of 17 privies, 10 ash closets, and 1 pail closet, which is an improvement of 16 conversions above the figure for last year.

### Housing

A record number of new houses were built in the District, totalling 136, of which 109 were completed by Contractors on behalf of the Council, 16 by private enterprise and 11 by Contractors on behalf of the Air Ministry.

In the same period, 4 houses were demolished voluntarily by their owners, and 8 houses were permanently discontinued as dwellings. The latter comprised houses in Clearance Areas made prior to the last War and it has not been felt expedient to require their demolition while adjoining condemned properties remain occupied.

Under the Housing Act, 1949, the Council has received 16 formal applications for improvement grants involving 31 houses. Approval was given to applications concerning 26 houses and these were confirmed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. The Council refused 3 applications, and 2 others, approved by the Council, are awaiting Ministry approval.

Having regard to the fact that prior to this year, only 8 improvement grant applications had been approved, there appears to be a sudden realisation of the advantages. Indeed there have been innumerable enquiries (even one from a person who wished to instal a fireplace) regarding the possibility of obtaining a grant.

The Compromise Rural Housing Survey has proceeded slowly, only the Parish of Glanton being completed during the year. The provisional categorisations are as follows:-

Parish of Glanton	<u>Category</u>				
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
	2	25	57	32	14

The position to date is that 2,725 properties have been categorised; 453 in Category 1; 550 in Category 2; 911 in Category 3; 551 in Category 4; and 260 in Category 5.

#### Public Cleansing

Purchase of a third collecting vehicle which commenced operation on the 1st April, enabled a collection service to be extended to every Parish in the District, though still excluding certain isolated properties, principally occupied by the farming community who normally are somewhat better placed to effect their own disposal arrangements.

In the older collecting vehicles the amount of wet refuse, nightsoil and bucket contents, has taken severe toll of the steel bodies and a certain amount of plating with new steel sheet has had to be resorted to in order to keep the bodies in one piece. More extensive plating is likely to be required.

Written complaints about the collection service have been remarkably few in number, though several verbal or telephoned messages have been readily dealt with, generally to the satisfaction of the complainant. Several instances have been recorded where articles have been inadvertently deposited in dustbins by tenants. In one case a new shirt, complete in box, was disposed of in this way and despite searches by both refuse collectors and Sanitary Inspector, was not located. Other losses have generally had a happier ending.

#### Food Inspection

The following foods were examined, condemned and Condemnation Certificates issued, to enable claims to be made by the retailers concerned:-

Canned Goods.....	204 cans.
Sugar.....	2 cwt.
Christmas Puddings.....	18 packets.
Beef.....	2 lbs.
Pickles.....	4 jars.
Fruit Cordial.....	9 bottles.

No legal proceedings were involved.

#### Ice Cream

There is still no ice cream actually manufactured in registered premises within the District. 4 New Registrations were approved under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, all of which were concerned with retailers of pre-packed wrapped ice cream. Interruption of the electricity supply in some infrequent occasions has caused loss of condition in ice cream stored in electrically operated refrigerator cabinets. Such ice cream was not sold, however, and was promptly replaced by the manufacturer.

### Bakers Vans

Despite the Byelaws as to Food Handling, there is still room for improvement in the handling of bread at bakers vans. At the same time, it is still difficult to see how an employee, driving the van, handling the money, etc. can avoid a certain amount of contamination, unless all bread is wrapped and all cakes set in paper cases.

### Cowsheds and Dairies.

The County Milk Regulations Officer advises that a total of 98 dairy farms are registered in the District, 4 less than in the previous year. Despite this reduction, the Manager of the Co-operative Dairy in the Alnwick Urban District reports steadily increasing quantities of milk arriving at the Dairy for treatment, some of which originates from this District.

There are now 7 registered distributors supplying milk in the District.

The Council issued 2 Supplementary Licences to dealers wishing to retail designated milks.

### Sanitary Inspection.

It has been decided to dispense with the tabulated list setting out the numbers and varieties of inspections made, as it is felt that apart from lack of interest in the form of presentation, the figures are probably meaningless when no other detail is given.

Briefly, some 190 visits have been paid to premises that have been the subject of complaint regarding structural defects or alleged existence of a nuisance. The complaints of nuisance have been of infinite variety and included complaints of smoke, dry rot, dampness, dead mice and flooding.

### Disinfestation

Two cases of infestations by fleas were dealt with and in both, the initial treatment did not prove entirely successful. A second treatment was necessary which in one case was successful and in the other, believed successful (the house has not been occupied since).

### Disinfection

Disinfection of property or goods was carried out in only 8 instances by the Sanitary Inspector, two of these being in respect of library books issued by the County Council to borrowers, where infectious disease was contracted subsequently.

### Factories

Inspections were made at 12 factories in connection with sanitary conveniences. In three cases inadequate provision had been made and verbal agreement was reached with the occupiers for the inadequacies to be remedied. Lack of cleanliness in temporary latrines was found on two building sites, and was subsequently remedied.

The total number of factories on the register was 50, and of these 31 had mechanical powered machinery.

No formal notices were served during the year.



National Assistance Act

Two prospective cases were brought to the notice of the Sanitary Inspector. In one, action was precluded by the assistance given to the person by the "Home Help Service," and in the other the threat of action for removal of the person to an Institution produced such a change in what was originally a filthy premise, that further action was not contemplated.

Naming of Streets and Numbering of Houses.

This was carried out in the Parishes of Togston, Shilbottle and Warkworth after the requisite notices had been served.

Rodent Control

The following is a summary of the Annual Report on the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, which has been submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries:-

	T y p e o f P r o p e r t y				
	Local Authority	Dwelling Houses	Agric- ultural	Business and Industrial	Total
1. Properties in District.	27	3,489	841	315	4,672
2. Properties Inspected	27	148	102	47	354
3. Properties Rat Infested.	21	78	54	11	163
4. Properties Mouse Infested.	-	4	-	-	4
5. Notices served requiring treatment or structural works.	-	-	-	-	Nil.
6. Block Control	27 treatments involving land and properties				

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,  
Your obedient Servant,

B. TREVOR-ROPER,

Medical Officer of Health.





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